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Abstract:

Methods and apparatus for treating disc herniation provide a conformable device which assumes a first shape associated with insertion and a second shape or expanded shape to occlude the defect which typically follows partial discectomy. The device may take different forms, including patches ~~size~~ sized to cover the defect, ~~[[or]]~~ plugs adapted to fill the defect, ~~a gel or other liquid or semi-liquid which solidifies to occlude the defect from within the body of the disc itself, or~~ a mesh screen collapsed into an elongated form for the purposes of insertion, thereby minimizing the size of the requisite incision while avoiding delicate surrounding nerves. Such a configuration also permits the use of instrumentation to install the device, including, for example, a hollow tube or sheath adapted to hold the collapsed screen~~[[,]]~~ and a push rod to expel the collapsed device out of the sheath for use in occluding the disc defect. A device may further include one or more anchors to assist in permanently affixing the device with respect to the defect.